



Adoption Leave Policy

Why and who

This policy explains what support is available to employees who are adopting a child, including details about adoption leave and pay. It should be used together with the [Family Policies: Guidance Document](#).

This policy applies to all Channel 4 employees. It is not part of any employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.



Adoption Leave Policy

The important bits

The lingo

When it comes to any form of family leave, there's a lot of HR lingo and abbreviations. Any specific to this policy are defined here, but there's also a full glossary in the [Family Policies: Guidance Document](#).

Who is this policy for?

Statutory adoption leave and your rights covering situations when:

- the child being adopted is from the UK
- the child being adopted is from overseas
- local authority foster parents are fostering to adopt
- employees expect to become the legal parents of a child born under a surrogacy arrangement

The sooner you tell us you're adopting, the better. It means we can get ready for your time away and arrange cover. You need to give us proof of your match date. This is the date a child is officially matched with a prospective adoptive family, and it marks the start of the placement process. Within 7 days of your match date you need to tell us:

- your leave start date
- your expected week of placement (EWP) – the week the child is due to be placed with you

For surrogacy arrangements you must also:

- intend to apply for a [parental order](#)
- expect the parental order to be granted, for example, because you don't have any convictions involving children, and the birth mother or father agree to the arrangement

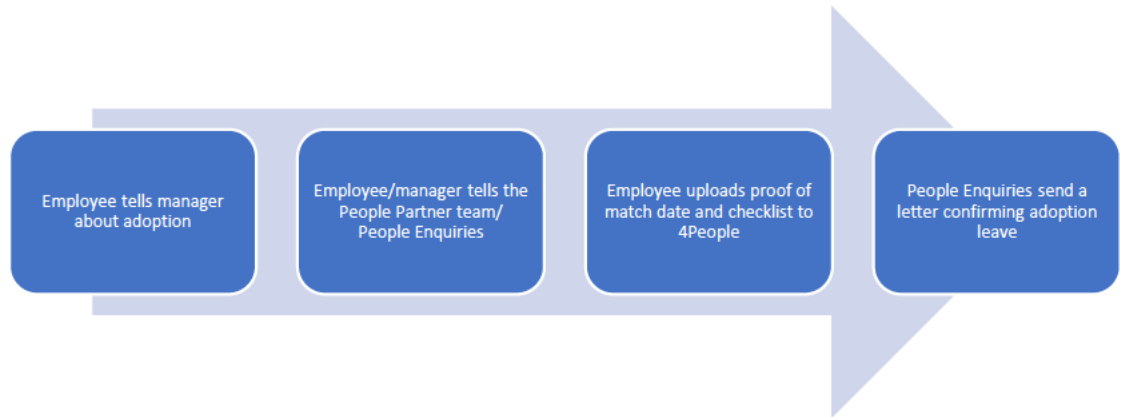
You don't qualify for adoption leave if you:

- arrange a private adoption
- become a special guardian or kinship carer
- adopt a stepchild
- adopt a family member



The process to confirm your adoption leave and pay

The process you need to follow to confirm your adoption leave and pay will look something like the following diagram:



We know this is a big change for you, and we're here to support you. All discussions with your manager or the People team will be confidential until you're ready to share more. Telling us about your plans to adopt early helps us give you the right support, plan your handover and get the family leave documents ready. It also gives you time to ask us any questions you have about your adoption leave.

Adoption leave

You don't need to have worked for Channel 4 for a certain amount of time to get statutory adoption leave. But, like with family/maternity leave, only one parent is entitled to adoption leave. The other parent might be able to take a period of family/parental leave if qualifying conditions are met.

Your adoption leave can start:

- up to 14 days before the date the child starts living with you for UK adoptions
- when the child arrives in the UK or within 28 days of this date for overseas adoptions
- the day the child is born or the day after if you've used a surrogate to have the child

Length of adoption leave

The maximum adoption leave you can take is 52 weeks and it doesn't matter what your working hours are. This 52 weeks is made up of:

- 26 weeks of **ordinary adoption leave (OAL)** and then
- 26 weeks of **additional adoption leave (AAL)**



OAL (ordinary adoption leave)		AAL (additional adoption leave)
Leave start date	Weeks 0-26	Weeks 27-53

For example:

- request for 52 weeks of adoption leave to start on 1 October 2025
- OAL from 1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026
- AAL from 1 April 2026 to 29 September 2026

The main difference between OAL and AAL is how they affect your role when you return to work.

During or at the end of **OAL**:

- You can return to the same job on the same terms and conditions.

During or at the end of **AAL**:

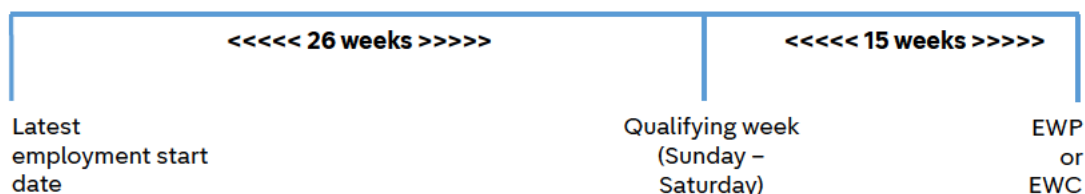
- You can come back to the same job on the same terms and conditions **unless** there have been significant changes that make it impossible for you to go back to the same role.
- If this happens, we'll try to find a suitable alternative with no less favourable terms and conditions.

If you're planning to swap leave with your partner as part of your shared parental leave entitlement, please read the [Shared Parental Leave Policy](#).

Adoption pay

Eligibility for adoption pay

To be eligible for **statutory adoption pay** you have to have worked continuously for Channel 4 for 26 weeks by any day within the 15th week before the expected week of placement (EWP) for adoptions or the expected week of childbirth (EWC) for surrogacy arrangements. This is called the **qualifying week**.



For example:

- expected week of placement or expected week of childbirth is 1 October 2025



- qualifying week is 15 to 21 June 2025
- latest employment start date to qualify is 21 December 2024

To qualify for adoption pay, we need proof of the adoption. For UK adoptions the proof must show:

- your name and address
- the name and address of the agency
- the match date, for example the matching certificate
- the expected date of the placement, for example a letter from the agency

For overseas adoptions and within 28 days of either reaching your 26 weeks of employment or when you receive your official adoption notification, you must show the following:

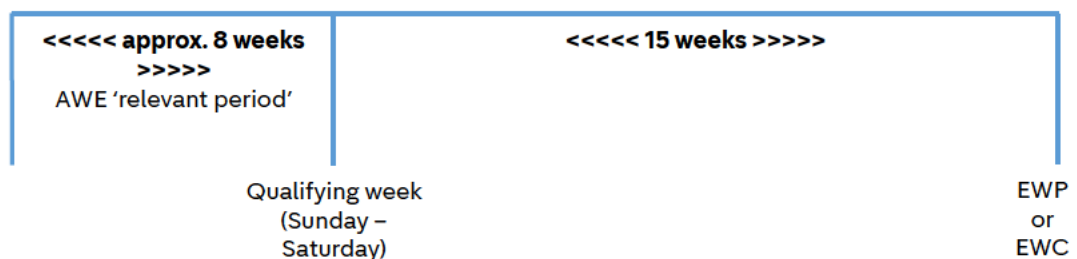
- relevant UK authority's 'official notification' confirming the parent is allowed to adopt
- date the child arrived in the UK, for example a plane ticket

Amount of adoption pay

The amount of adoption pay you are entitled to depends on how long you've worked for Channel 4 by the qualifying week.

To work out the qualifying week, find the Sunday before the day the baby is due (or the due day if that is a Sunday) and count back 15 Sundays. This Sunday is the start of the qualifying week.

Pay is based on your **average weekly earnings (AWE)**, This is your average earnings in the 2 months up to the last pay day before the end of your qualifying week – this is known as the **relevant period**.



For example:

- EWP or EWC is 1 October 2025
- qualifying week is 15 to 21 June 2025
- relevant period is 1 April to 31 May 2025



As well as **statutory adoption pay (SAP)**, Channel 4 offers **enhanced adoption pay**. This is a top-up based on your length of service at the qualifying week. The table below explains what you may be entitled to.

Length of service at qualifying date	Adoption pay entitlement
Less than 26 weeks of continuous service	1 month at full AWE pay You may be entitled to adoption allowance paid by Jobcentre Plus . Please contact them directly to make enquiries.
26 weeks to 12 months' continuous service	4 months' at full AWE pay (including SAP). 23 weeks at SAP. 13 weeks unpaid.
More than 12 months' continuous service	4 months' at full AWE pay (including SAP). 4 months' at half AWE pay (including SAP). 7 weeks of SAP. 13 weeks unpaid.

Keeping in touch days

To help yourself back to work after your adoption leave, you can take up to 10 **keeping in touch (KIT)** days without having to end or change your adoption leave dates. These are completely optional and must be agreed by both you and your manager. Any KIT days will be paid at the normal pay rate and not on top of maternity pay. This is done by uploading a KIT day form to your 4People record. More details about KIT days are in the [Family Policies: Guidance Document](#).

The really important bits

Benefits and pension contributions

You'll still be entitled to and receive any benefits you've already registered for and had access to before your adoption leave. You'll get a letter that explains how your pension, any variable pay and any other benefits will be affected during your adoption leave.

If you normally make pension contributions, these will continue during your adoption leave, but they'll be reduced in line with your actual monthly pay. If you want to continue contributing based on your normal pay, please contact [People Enquiries](#). Channel 4 will still pay the full employer contributions based on your full pay for the whole period of your adoption leave.



Support and related policies

If you have any questions about this policy or process you can:

- speak to your manager
- contact the [People Partnering team](#) with specific or personal questions
- contact [People Enquiries](#)

Other policies that might help are:

- [Family Policies: Guidance Document](#)
- [Carers Policy](#)
- [Fertility Treatment Policy](#)
- [Family/Maternity Policy](#)
- [Neonatal Policy](#)
- [Unpaid Parental Leave Policy](#)
- [Family/Parental Policy](#)
- [Shared Parental Leave Policy](#)
- [Pregnancy Loss Policy](#)

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

What websites should I look at to find out about adoption?

Lots of websites can help but [Maternity Action](#) and [Adoption UK](#) are great sources of information and they also have support lines.

What if I want to change my adoption leave dates?

If you change the start date of your adoption leave, please give us at least 28 days' notice. We'll confirm your new leave and return dates in writing.

What if I want to return sooner than originally planned?

If you want to change your return date, you must give us at least 8 weeks' notice in writing, which should be sent directly to your manager. We may be able to accommodate an earlier return without this much notice, but it might be later than your proposed date.

What if I want to take shared parental leave?

Please read the [Shared Parental Leave Policy](#) for more information.

What happens if the adoption process ends early?

We're so sorry if this has happened to you. We want to support you in the best way possible. You can stay on adoption leave for up to 8 weeks after the end of the week the placement ended in the following circumstances:



- if you have already begun your adoption leave when the adoption agency tells you the placement will not happen
- your child dies during adoption leave
- your child is returned to the adoption agency

Policy owner	People Team
Approved by	<div></div>
Date of next review	Within 3 years